

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BUSINESS FACILITATION

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(D) MOSCOW 14213, (E) MOSCOW 14666

SUMMARY: OCTOBER 17 MEETING WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
TRADE (MFT) CHIEF OF PROTOCOL RAKHMANIN COVERED VISAS, HOUSING, LOCAL
EMPLOYEES AND SPECIFIC PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ON-SITE
CONSTRUCTION. SURPRISINGLY, RAKHMANIN SAID CONSIDERATION
WAS BEING GIVEN ON "POSITIVE" BASIS TO GRANTING ALL
BUSINESSMEN OF ACCREDITED FIRMS MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT
VISAS IF US WOULD DO SAME FOR SOVIET BUSINESS PERSONNEL
IN US. HE ASKED FOR REDUCTION TO 14 DAYS IN TIME
OF GRANTING VISITORS' VISAS AND PROLONGATION OF DATE OF
VALIDITY. CONCERNING VISAS FOR USDOC EXHIBIT PERSONNEL,
HE REFERRED US TO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. WHILE HE MADE
NO COMMITMENTS, RAKHMANIN SAID OUR EXPRESSION OF CONCERN
ON HOUSING POBLEM WOULD BE NOTED. WE RAISED SIX
SUBJECTS UNDER HEADING OF ON-SITE CONDITIONS, GIVING
SPECIFIC EXAMPLES WHERE PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN. RAKHMANIN
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INDICATED THT SOVIETS NO LONGER WILL REQUIRE THT
INCOMING TECHNICIANS BE "ESCORTED" FROM MOSCOW TO SITE
IF THERE IS DIRECT FLIGHT. HE AGREED TO LOOK INTO
PROBLEMS WE RAISED. AT CONCLUSION RAKHMANIN AGRUED THAT
"SEVEN PERCENTDISCOUNT" ACCORDED TO SOVIET DIPLOMATS
IN US (WE ASSUME FOR STATE AND LOCAL TAXES)
IS NOT ACCORDED TO SOVIET BUSINESSMEN, WHEREAS US

BUSINESSMEN IN USSR ENJOY SAME HARD CURRENCY STORE "CUPON" PRIVILEGES AS DIPLOMATS. WE NOTED THAT THESE ARE NOT COMPARABLE CASES, BUT HE APPEARED TO BE THREATENING TO MOVE US BUSINESSMEN INTO LESS DESIRABLE CATEGORY. OUR RECOMMENDATION IS THAT US SIDE IN OCTOBER 28 MEETING NOTE WITH SATISFACTION THAT SOVIETS SAY THEY ARE GIVING POSITIVE CONSIDERATION TO EXTENSION OF MULTIPLE ENTRY EXIT AND ENTRY VISAS TO ALL BUSINESSMEN OF ACCREDITED US FIRMS AND ENSURE THAT WE WOULD RECIPROCATE. WE WOULD FAVOR REDUCING VISAS WAITING TIME FOR BUSINESS VISITORS TO 14 DAYS IF THIS IS POSSIBLE. ALSO SUGGEST THAT YOU STRESS IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVEMENT IN HOUSING SITUATION AND IN LIBERALIZING TREATMENT OF SPECIALISTS ON ON-SITE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS. WE DO NOT YET HAVE DATE FOR NEXT MEETING WITH MANZHULO, BUT LAST TIME WE WERE INFORMED ON 24-HOUR NOTICE. END SUMMARY.

1. E/C COUNSELOR, ACCOMPANIED BY COMATT, CALLED ON MFT CHIEF OF PROTOCOL OCTOBER 17 PURSUANT TO SUGGESTIONS OF MANZHULO (REF D) AND MRKTUMOV (REF C) TO DISCUSS IN GREATER DETAIL PROBLEMS OF VISAS, HOUSING, LOCAL EMPLOYEES AND ON-SITE CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS. IN TURN, RAKHMANIN PRESENTED SOVIET PROPOSALS ON VISAS FOR BUSINESS VISITORS AND PURCHASE PRIVILEGES OF RESIDENT BUSINESSMEN.

2. VISAS. WE ASKED THAT ALL REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPUTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPRESENTATIVES OF ACCREDITED US FIRMS IN MOSCOW BE GIVEN MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT VISAS. WE ALSO ASKED FOR THIS TREATMENT FOR USDOC EXHIBIT PERSONNEL PER REF C (PARA 12). RAKHMANIN ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE, WHICH HE SAID WAS BEING GIVEN CONSIDERATION ON "POSITIVE BASIS" WITH MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM POSSIBLE. HE ASKED ASSURANCE THAT ALL ACCREDITED SOVIET BUSINESSMEN IN US WOULD BE ACCORDED EQUIVALENT TREATMENT, AND WE CONFIRMED THAT THIS WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING. (RAKHMANIN MAY HAVE BEEN ALLUDING TO PROBLEM OF "L" VISAS REPORTED REFTEL E.)

3. IN TURN, RAKHMANIN ASKED THAT US AGREE TO REDUCE VISAS ISSUANCE PERIOD TO 14 VICE 21 DAYS. HE ALSO ASKED THAT PERIOD OF VALIDITY UNTIL ENTRY BE EXTENDED TO GIVE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN USE. WE SAID THIS SUGGESTION WOULD BE REPORTED BUT GAVE NO ASSURANCE THAT CURRENT PROCEDURES COULD EASILY BE CHANGED. CONCERNING VISAS FOR USDOC EXHIBIT PERSONNEL, RAKHMANIN SAID THAT THIS MATTER NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED THROUGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, BUT MFT WOULD INFORM CHAMBER OF OUR PROPOSAL.

4. HOUSING. WE STRESSED GREAT INCONVENIENCE TO US
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES OF INADEQUATE HOUSING, CITING
FIRST CASE OF INGERSOLL-RAND REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON WHO HAS
BEEN IN HOTEL ROOM FOR ABOUT ONE YEAR WHILE WIFE RESIDES IN
VIENNA. WE ALSO CITED CASE OF ARMCO STEEL REPRESENTATIVE
PERPER, ARTHUR ANDERSON DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE
BECKETT AND COOPER INDUSTRIES DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE CANNON.
RAKHMANIN RESPONDED THAT "IN PRINCIPLE" OUR REMARKS ARE
JUSTIFIED, BUT MENTIONED SOVIETS HAVE ACCREDITED FIRMS
HAVING A TOTAL OF 55 US CITIZENS AND HAVE HOUSED ALL BUT
EIGHT PERSONS. RAKHMANIN SAID THAT PROBLEM WOULD BE
DEALT WITH. WHILE HE DID NOT WISH TO DEAL WITH PERSONAL
CASES, SOVIET SIDE WOULD NOTE THAT WE HAVE RAISED THEM AT
COUNSELOR LEVEL.
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5. LOCAL EMPLOYEES. NOTING THAT MANZHULO HAD PROMISED
TO RAISE TRAINING/TRAVEL OUTSIDE USSR FOR LOCAL EMPLOYEES
OF US FIRMS WITH UPDI, WE INQUIRED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY
UPDK RESPONSE. RAKHMANIN RESPONDED THAT MANZHULO HAD BEEN
"ABSOLUTELY RIGHT" IN SAYING THAT UPDK IS COMPETENT

ORGAN. ASKED DIRECTLY
IF MANZHULO HAD NEVERTHELESS PASSED
ON OUR CONCERN, RAKHMANIN AVOIDED CLEAR RESPONSE BUT
INQUIRED IF COUNSELFOR HAD TAKEN UP ISSUE WITH UPDK DIRECTOR
KUZNETSOV. HE WAS INFORMED THAT WE HAD WRITTEN TO
KUZNETSOV ONLY ON SPECIFIC CASE OF USCO COMMERCIAL
ASSISTANT AFONINA (WHO WAS PRESENT) WHO WE WISHED TO HAVE
ATTND TRAINING SEMINAR FOR FSL COMMERCIAL EMPLOYEES IN
WARSAW, TO WHICH WE AS YET HAD NO RESPONSE. (RAKHMANIN
WAS UNDER MISAPPREHENSION THAT LETTER HAD BEEN ANSWERED,
CONFUSING IT WITH EARLIER TURNDOWN ADDRESSED BY PORYATNIKOV
TO COMATT.) HE STATE THAT THIS SUBJECT COULD BEST BE HANDLED
"IN PERSON" (OTHER THAN BY MAIL).

6. ON-SITE CONDITIONS. WE EXPRESSED OUR CONCURRENCE
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WITH MANZHULO'S OBSERVATION (REF D) THAT CONDITIONS COULD
BEST BE COVERED IN CONTRACTS AND NOTED THAT WE ARE
PREPARING SOME DRAFT MODEL LANGUAGE TO COVER THESE ASPECTS.
(FYI: WE DID SO TO UNDERLINE THAT THIS "SUGGESTION,"
WHICH WE CONDIERED TO US ADVANTAGE, WAS MADE BY SOVIET
SIDE. WE ASSUME SOVIETS WILL NOT BE SO HAPPY IF US FIRMS
DO INSIST ON CONDITIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE BECOME
STANDARD. END FYI). RAKHMANIN NODDED APPROVAL TO OUR
COMMENT THATIT WAS ALSO IN SOVIET INTEREST THAT BEST
US TECHNICAL PEOPLE BE WILLING TO COME TO USSR TO WORK ON
THESE PROJECTS. IN RESPONSE TO RAKHMANIN'S REQUEST FOR
SPECIFIC CASES, WE RAISED FOLLOWING SIZ CATEGORIES, GIVING
AT LEAST ONE EXAMPLE IN EACH CASE:

A) ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE LOGISTICS. WE NOTED IN-
CONVENIENCE AND EXPENSE OF REQUIREMENT THATSOVIET ESCORT
ACCOMPANY ALL TECHNICIANS FROM MOSCOW TO CONSTRUCTION
SITE. IT WOULD BE MORE REASONABLE THAT INCOMING TECHNICIANS
BE MET AT NEAREST AIRPORT TO CONSTRUCTION SITE. RAKHMANIN
SAID THAT ALREADY AT PRESENT ESCORTS ARE NOT REQUIRED IF
FLIGHTS ARE DIRECT, ADDING "WE ALSO DO NOT HAVE
THE NECESSARY TIME AND PEOPLE." WHERE THRE IS STOPOVER OR
TRAIN TRAVEL, ESCORTS WILL BLSNECESSARY BECAUSE SPECIALISTS
USUALLY DO NOT KNOW RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, HE SAID. UNLESS,
RAKHMANIN ADDED SARCASTICALLY, EMBASSY WISHED TO PROVIDE
ESCORT. WE SAID THAT THIS MIGHT VERY WELL BE POSSIBLE.
RAKHMANIN THEN RETREATED TO SAY EMBASSY WOULD HAVE TO
AGREE TO PROVIDE ESCORT IN ALL CASES, AND THIS WOULD
HAVE TO BE RAISED WITH HIGHER AUTHORITY.

B) LIVING CONDITIONS. AFTER WE HAD REFERRED TO CRAMPED
LIVING QUARTERS OF OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM EMPLOYEES IN
ODESSA, RAKHMANIN ASDED FOR ANOTHER EXAMPLE. WE
CITED ALLIS-CHALMERS PERSONNEL IN KOMSOMOL'SK AND COOPER
INDUSTRIES IN SARATOV (A SHORT-TERM PROJECT). RAKHMANIN

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SAID ONLY THAT SOVIET SIDE WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO SOLVZ THE PROBLEM.

C) RECREATION. WE NOTED THAT PERSONNEL IN VENTSPILS CANNOT GO TO RIGA OR TALLINN. A SPECIALISTS WITHIN SIGHT OF KUIBYSHEV CANNOT GO THERE. ON-SITE PERSONNEL SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND MAGAZINES DIRECTLY, AS A MATTER OF IMPROVING MORALE. RAKHMANIN HAD NO SPECIFIC RESPONSE ON THIS POINT ASIDE FROM ACKNOWLEDGING LEGITIMACY OF OUR CONCERN OVER MORALE OF ON-SITE EMPLOYEES.

D) COMMUNICATIONS. WE POINTED TO NEED FOR TELEX, TELEPHONE AND PHOTO COPYING FACILITIES WHICH ON-SITE EMPLOYEES CAN CONTROL. WE CITED A LETTER FROM US CITIZENS IN KOMSOMOL'SK COMPLAINING OF RESTRICTIONS ON THEM THERE AND APPEALING TO EMBASSY TO HELP THEM GET COMMUNICATIONS WITH THEIR FAMILIES IN THE US. RAKHMANIN SUGGESTED THAT THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD BE SOLVED THROUGH CONTRACTS BUT AGREED TO LOOK INTO CASES WHICH WE MENTIONED.

E) LOCAL TRANSPORTATION. WE SUGGESTED THAT EMPLOYEES BE PERMITTED USE OF PERSONAL CARS TO TRAVEL TO THE WORK SITE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM WORK TEAM IN ODESSA HAS LOST A TOTAL OF MORE THAN 100 WORK DAYS FOR LACK OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE PORT. RAKHMANIN SAID SOVIETS WOULD TRY TO IMPROVE SITUATION BUT NOTED THAT SOVIETS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME RIGHT IN US. THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED THERE, TOO. US SPECIALISTS COULD "ALWAYS" RENT A CAR FROM INTOURIST, HE THOUGHT. HE RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY TO QUESTION IF THEY COULD RENT CAR WITHOUT A DRIVER. RAKHMANIN REITERATED SOVIET WISH FOR RIGHT TO RENT CARS OUTSIDE WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK.

F) INTERPRETERS, ETC. WE NOTED THAT MANY US FIRMS WHO HAVE ON SITE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT ABSENCE OR LOW QUALITY OF INTERPRETERS PROVIDED BY SOVIET HOSTS. LACK OF TECHNICALLY COMPETENT INTERPRETERS, AS WELL AS SECRETARIES, COULD CAUSE SIGNIFICANT WORK

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DELAYS. IN RESPONSE RAKHMANIN SAID THAT SUPPLY OF CAPABLE INTERPRETERS IN USSR WAS NOT UNLIMITED. PERHAPS THE US COMPANY COULD PROVIDE ITS OWN INTERPRETERS.

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7. DISCOUNT PURCHASING. RAKHMANIN STATED THAT ALL ACCREDITED US BUSINESSMEN HAVE SAME RIGHTS AS DIPLOMATS TO PURCHASE AT HARD CURRENCY CUPON STORES. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY COULD BUY AUTOMOBILES AT A FIFTY PERCENT REDUCTION IN PRICE. BUT SOVIET BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON ARE NOT GRANTED THESE PRIVILEGES. THESE PRIVILEGES COULD BE DENIED US BUSINESSMEN HERE, SINCE THEY HAD BEEN EXTENDED ON ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WOULD BE RECIPROCITY. RAKHMANIN CONTENDED THAT SOVIET BUSINESSMEN ARE DENIED THE "SEVEN PERCENT DISCOUNT" ACCORDED TO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES. IN RESPONSE WE POINTED OUT THAT US HAD NO "HARD CURRENCY STORES" OFFERING SPECIAL PRICES TTO FOREIGNERS. RAKHMANIN, NOTING THAT IN THE USSR MUCH HIGHER PRICES ARE PAID ON LOCAL MARKET FOR RETAIL GOODS, SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF "HARD CURRENCY" STORES: TOSE SELLING FOR CURRENCY AND THOSE SELLING FOR COUPONS.BY PURCHASING AT THE LATTER STORES, AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN SAVE TEN TO FPFTEEN PERCENT OVER "DOLLAR" HARD CURRENCY STORES. WE INQUIRED WHETHER IT WERE TRUE THAT ALL ACCRDITED FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN IN USSR SHARE THIS PRIVILEGE OF BUYING

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FOR COUPONS. RAKHMANIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS IS THE CASE. WE COMMENDTD THAT SINCE RAKHMANIN APPEARED TO BE TALKING

ABOUT GIVING SOVIET BUSINESSMEN TAX IMMUNITY ACCORDED TO DIPLOMATS, THE TWO CASES WERE NOT ANALOGOUS. RAKHMANIN ASSERTED THAT THEY ARE: ALL PERSONS MUST LIVE WITHIN THEIR BUDGET.

8. IN CONCLUSION RAKHMAIN STATED THAT ALL PROBLEMS DISCUSSED DURING SESSION WOULD SOMEDAY BE SOLVED, BUT NOT ALL OF THEM IMMEDIATELY. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE BRING TO HIS ATTENTION ANY SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF WHICH WE BECOME AWARE.

9. COMMENT: WE ARE A LITTLE CONCERNED THAT THE US PROPOSAL ON MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT VISAS MADE IN WASHINGTON WOULD NOT INCLUDE THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS OF ACCREDITED US FIRMS WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVES. A NUMBER OF FIRMS ALREADY HAVE SUCH PERSONS AS DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES AND MORE COULD BE COMING. WHILE SOVIETS MAY RESIST INCLUDING THEM, WE THINK IT WOULD BE A FAIR TRADE-OFF FOR GRANTING SIMILAR TREATMENT TO ALL SOVIET BUSINESS PERSONNEL IN US, WHO ARE IN GREATER NUMBERS. WHILE WE ARE NOT ABLE TO ASSESS WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE VISA ISSUANCE TIME TO 14 DAYS, WE WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THIS PROPOSAL IF IT IS PART OF AN ACCEPTABLE CONSULAR "PACKAGE". IN PRACTICE WE DO USUALLY MEET THIS CRITERION, WHERE SOVIETS HAVE PROVIDED SUFFICIENT ADVANCE INFORMATION ON TRAVEL PLANS, AND WE WOULD MAKE THIS A CONDITION FOR AGREEING TO ANY REDUCTION. WE ASSUME RAKHMANIN'S REFERENCE TO WHAT AMOUNTS TO IMMUNITY FROM SALES TAX FOR SOVIET BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE TO USG, BUT WE BELIEVE SOVIETS MAY PRESS POINT IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS. IF US BUSINESSMEN WERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DENIED ACCESS TO SOVIET "COUPON" GROCERY SHOPPING, NOT ONLY WOULD THEIR COSTS BE HIGHER PER ARTICLE, BUT THEY WOULD FIND A NUMBER OF COMMODITIES UNAVAILABLE EVEN IN THE "DOLLAR" STORE. WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT SOVIETS WOULD TAKE SUCH A STEP, HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF FACT THAT BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE ENTITLED TO SHOP IN THE "COUPON STORE". WE WOULD HOPE THAT IN OCTOBER 28 SESSION US REPRESENTATIVES WOULD ALSO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING CONDITIONS OF ON-SITE TECHNICIANS IN USSR, A SUBJECT WHICH WE INTEND TO FOLLOW CLOSELY. TOON

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